

New housing lease-signing deadline April 30

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377th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

Residents planning to remain in base housing need to mark April 30 on their calendars: if you haven't signed a lease with Kirtland's new housing management company by then, you will soon find yourself living in a new home; a new home off base that is.

Families currently living in base housing or those just interested flocked to the Town Hall Meeting in the base theater Monday evening to hear the details of Kirtland's housing privatization project. Speakers included representatives from base civil engineering, Hunt Corporation, the building contractor, and EPT Management Company.

Since base housing will be run by a private management company, residents will have to sign a lease

and pay rent as if living off-base. EPT Management will set up appointments throughout April, offering flexible hours including weekends. EPT estimates lease agreements will take only 20 minutes per family.

Rent will initially equal your BAH. Once your home is metered by the electric company, PNM, your rent will be your BAH minus a utility allowance. That allowance will be approximately 110 percent of an estimated utility rate, depending on the size of your home and family. The utility allowance will be updated annually to keep up with inflation.

If you decide to move off-base, you will be responsible for the cost of the move.

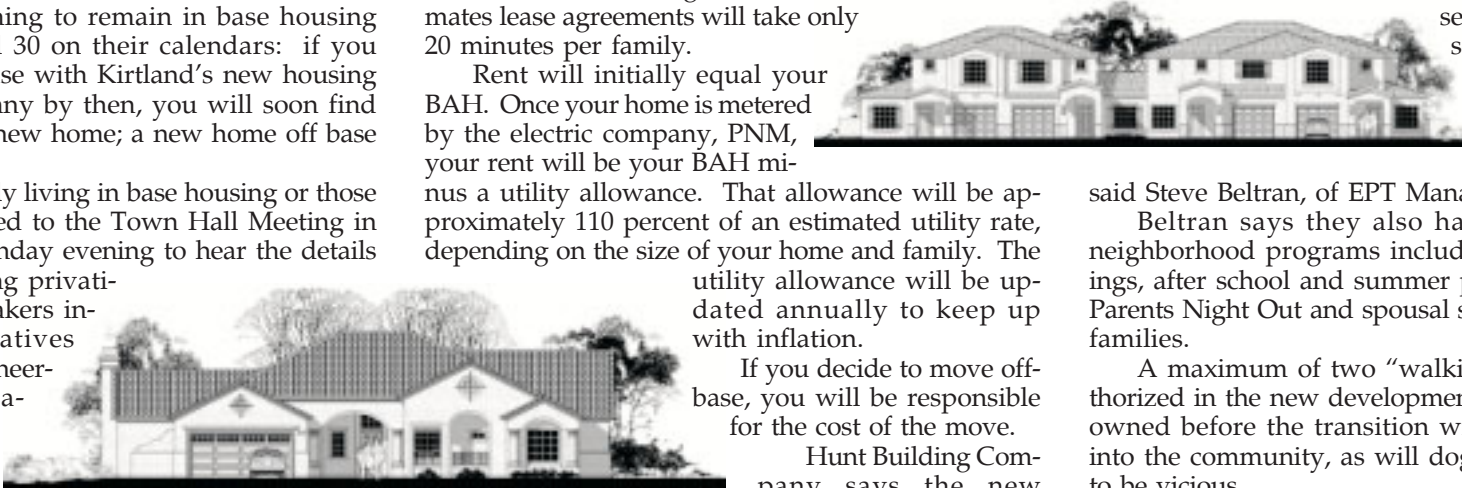
Hunt Building Company says the new homes are of a neo-traditional design, meaning they have porches in the front and back to promote neighborhood interaction.

"Our commitment to Kirtland Air Force Base is to develop a housing experience that fosters social interaction, furnishes a sense of belonging and security, and provides a living environment that helps minimize the stress of duty and deployment,"

said Steve Beltran, of EPT Management. Beltran says they also have plans for many neighborhood programs including town hall meetings, after school and summer projects for children, Parents Night Out and spousal support for deployed families.

A maximum of two "walking" pets will be authorized in the new developments. Up to three pets owned before the transition will be grandfathered into the community, as will dog breeds determined to be vicious.

For additional information, contact the Housing Office at 846-8217 or visit the Housing page on Kirtland's web site, www.kirtland.af.mil.



Air Force Assistance Fund's campaign launches Monday

"Commitment to Caring," the 2003 Air Force Assistance Fund campaign, opens Monday and continues through April 25.

The fund benefits a variety of programs and services for Airmen. Begun in 1942 by then-Army Air Corp Gen. Hap Arnold, the campaign was called the Air Force Aid Society. Sixty years later, the program has evolved into even greater support of Air Force members through four organizations.

Through the Family Support Center, the Air Force Assistance Fund provides aid to all military members, in particular young Airmen, with rent or automotive repair problems, hospital bills and other concerns impacting their ability to perform their mission. It also awards thousands of grants to Air Force dependents pursuing higher education, helps expectant families through the Bundles for Babies program, provides medical equipment and support to special needs Air Force dependents through the Respite Care Program and helps Air Force families stay connected during deployments with the Phone Home Program that supplies phone cards to service members.

More than 1 million people are eligible today for aid from the assistance fund that is sustained by donations only. Your support is critical because no Air Force or other government funding is involved.

To learn more about how you can contribute to the Air Force Assistance Fund, contact your unit project officer or Capt. EmilioRuizsoriano at 846-1555, 1st Lt. Douglas Chilson at 846-3100 or Tech. Sgt. Montrealle Parker at 846-0587.

Medical care for Airmen affected by Stop-Loss

BY MAJ. JOHN J. THOMAS
Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs

A previously overlooked provision of law allows up to four months of Tricare transitional health care benefits for Airmen separating from the service after having been retained under Stop-Loss.

The benefits will apply to any Airman separating after the current and any future Stop-Loss actions, according to officials at the Air Force Personnel Center here.

Because of an administrative oversight, more than 5,000 Airmen retained on active duty under the October 2001 to August 2002 Stop-Loss did not get word of the benefit, officials said. The benefit was part of the 2002 Defense Authorization Act.

Letters sent to those former Airmen tell them they can file for reimbursement of medical expenses incurred during the 60- to 120-day period after they left the service. But they will not be reimbursed for insurance premiums they may have paid, said Judith Warner, chief of the career assistance and relocation office at the center here.

According to the law, benefits begin on an individual's official date of separation and cannot be adjusted. Individuals

who served more than six years on active-duty are entitled to 120 days of coverage. Those with fewer than six years are entitled

to 60 days of coverage. "It's only for a short time but this is a nice benefit, when you look at it," said Lt. Gen. Richard E. "Tex" Brown, deputy chief of staff for personnel at the Pentagon. "Not only for now but for the future."

"It'll make it easier for individuals to transition after they've made that extra sacrifice (of being affected by Stop-Loss)," the general said.

Air Force officials learned of the law's provision when a concerned former major called to ask if Airmen affected by Stop-Loss were covered, Warner said.

"We asked for a legal opinion by the AFPC and air staff legal (officials) and received an interpretation from both that the law covered everyone impacted by Stop-Loss," she said.

Information was then sent to Air Force transition offices in early November to explain the situation and how to extend those benefits to Airmen who had not yet separated, she said. Analysts then began to identify and notify each affected person.

People eligible for coverage who have paid for health care expenses out of their pocket may submit a claim form (Department of Defense Form 2642) to Tricare with a copy of the bill to be reimbursed, officials said.

The law does not affect retiring Airmen who were held over as result of Stop-Loss because they already retain a continuing entitlement to retiree health care benefits.

Assistance is available from a benefits counselor at military treatment facilities and from Tricare regional offices.

The worldwide Tricare Information Center toll free number is (888) 363-2273. Claims information and forms are available at <https://tricare.osd.mil> by clicking on "TRICARE Map" on the left-hand side of the home page and by using the "search" feature.

People can call the AFPC's family matters operations branch at (800) 581-9437 for assistance. (Courtesy of AFPC News Service)

SERVICES

by Mike Anderson, 377th Services Squadron, 853-1216

Discount tickets available
Information, Tickets and Travel offers discounted tickets to amusement parks in California, Texas, Florida and Colorado.
Call 846-2924.

Boys, girls club holds teen forum
A teen forum is **tonight**, 6-8 p.m., at the Boys and Girls Club.
Join your fellow teens for games and activities.
Call 853-5437.

Kirtland AFB MVD convenient, fast
For convenient service, stop by the Motor Vehicle Division, inside Information, Tickets and Travel. The office is open **Monday-Friday**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., with military priority, 8-9 a.m.
Call 846-8390.

Outdoor Rec holds fly fishing training
Several instructors offer Fly Fishing class. The class is on two consecutive Saturdays, **April 26** 8:30-11:30 a.m. and **May 3**, 8:30 -11:30 a.m.
Cost is \$30.
Register at Outdoor Recreation 846-1499.

Community center sets domino tournaments
The Rio Grande Community Center is holding a dominoes tournament, **March 28**, 7 p.m.
Registration deadline is the day before tournament.
Call 853-1861.

Writers group meets
A Writers' Group meets the **second Wednesday** of every month, noon in the Rio Grande Community Center.
Call 853-1861.

Chess tourney held
A chess tournament is **tomorrow**, 9 a.m.-7 p.m., at the Rio Grande Community Center.
Call 853-1861.

Open mike night, free snacks tonight
The Rio Grande Community Center has an alcohol-free happy hour and open microphone night, **tonight**, 7-9 p.m.
Refreshments are free.
Call 853-1861.

Boys, girls club sponsors preteen night
Preteen Night is **March 28**, 7-10:30 p.m., at the Boys and Girls Club.
The evening, open to youth ages 6-12, is \$5 for members and \$7 for nonmembers.
Call 853-5437.

Free Internet access available at Cafe 66
Check e-mail, surf the Net or just use a computer for free at Cafe 66, **Monday-Thursday**, 9 a.m.-8 p.m., and **Friday**, 9 a.m.-9:30 p.m.
Call 853-1861.

Child Care seeks providers
The Family Child Care program is recruiting new providers, particularly ones who will care for children younger than two years.
The program needs providers interested in working with special needs children or providing care during nontraditional hours, such as swing or evening shifts.



Coffee and Snack Bar

Hours of Operation
Monday-Friday 7 a.m.-1 p.m.

Located in the
Consolidated Support Building

The Family Child Care office is open 8-9 a.m. weekdays to help parents find child care.
Staff is also available to assist with placement in the extended duty care program.
Call 846-1802.

Club holds membership night
Mountain View Club has a membership night, **April 9**. Doors open at 5 p.m. The buffet features carved beef, fried chicken, baked ham, fried potatoes, sweet potatoes, greens, corn on the cob and pecan pie. The event is free for members, \$7.95 for non-members. Children 6-11, \$3.95 and children under six are free.

Parents' night out scheduled
Parents' Night Out is **March 28**, 6:45-10:30 p.m. at the Gibson Child Development Center. To ensure a spot for your child, an \$11 non-refundable fee should be paid by **March 26**.
Call 853-5521.

Women's Golf Association seeks members
The Tijeras Arroyo Women's Golf Association is looking for new members to join the group. The association plays Thursdays in March.
Call Evelyn Martinez at 293-1566 or Georgia Chapman

at 710-4356.

Outdoor Recreation sponsors trip
Outdoor Recreation takes a whitewater rafting trip to Pilar, New Mexico, **April 19**. Trip leaves at 5:30 a.m. and returns at 6 p.m. Cost is \$60.
Call 846-1499.

Jack Brown hosts Golf Clinic
Join Jack Brown hosts a golf clinic, **April 5,12,19** and **26**, 11 a.m.-noon. Cost is \$50 for adults and \$30 for juniors. A free golf clinic is **April 6**, 10-11 a.m.
Call 846-1574 for more information.